



**GET THE  
LEAD**

**OUT**

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**PREVENTION**

How to protect children  
against lead poisoning

Illinois Department of  
Public Health

**O**f the 1.2 million children aged 6 years and younger in Illinois, more than 6,400 children are considered to be lead poisoned because of the elevated level of lead in their blood.

However, lead in the body is not safe at any level.

Lead poisoning does not always produce symptoms. It can be detected with a simple blood test.

Because lead is found everywhere, city, suburban and rural children are all at risk if they breathe in lead dust or eat lead paint and dust.

Read this brochure to find out more about lead poisoning. Call your doctor, your local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Illinois Lead Program at 217-782-3517 or 866-909-3572 or TTY 800-547-0466 for information on having your home inspected for lead and removing lead hazards safely.

**HAVE YOUR CHILD TESTED FOR  
LEAD POISONING.**

# P REVENTION

How to protect children  
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## WHAT IS LEAD POISONING?

Lead poisoning is too much lead in the body. Lead is especially harmful to the small bodies of children younger than 6 years old.

Lead gets in their bodies when children eat lead or breathe it in. Lead is in —

- paint
- dust
- drinking water
- dirt outside

## HOW DOES LEAD AFFECT A CHILD?

Even small amounts of lead can harm a child's brain and nervous system. Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavior problems.

Your child may have lead poisoning and not feel sick. Your child may experience stomach aches or headaches or exhibit decreased appetite, hyperactivity, sleeping problems or irritability. Very high amounts can cause kidney damage, seizures, coma or even death.

## SCREEN YOUR CHILD FOR LEAD.

All children 6 months through 6 years old should be assessed for their risk of exposure to lead. Check to see if you live in a high-risk ZIP code by visiting [www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pdf/Lead\\_ZIP\\_Codes.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pdf/Lead_ZIP_Codes.pdf). Children living in high-risk ZIP codes are required to have a blood lead test.

To find out how to get your child tested, call your doctor or local health department.

Women planning to have a baby should be aware that lead in the mother's body can transfer to the developing fetus and can cause the baby to be born too small or too early.

## PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM LEAD.

Wash your children's hands before they eat.

Give your child foods high in iron and calcium such as lean meat, eggs, greens, milk, cheese, and yogurt. Fruits and fruit juices high in vitamin C such as tomatoes, oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, papaya, mangoes, cantaloupe and strawberries, will enhance iron intake, which will prevent the child's body from absorbing lead.

Clean up chipping and peeling paint inside and outside your home.

Clean up paint chips and lead dust in window sills and on the floor near windows, doorways and woodwork. Use a damp mop or cloth and a cleaning product.

Wash your child's toys often. Throw away lead-painted toys.

Do not store food in open cans or pottery.

If you work with lead, shower and change clothes before coming home. Wash your work clothes separately.

Run cold water for a few minutes before using it for cooking and drinking. Do not use water from the hot water tap for cooking, drinking or making formula.

## YOUR HOME MAY HAVE LEAD PAINT.

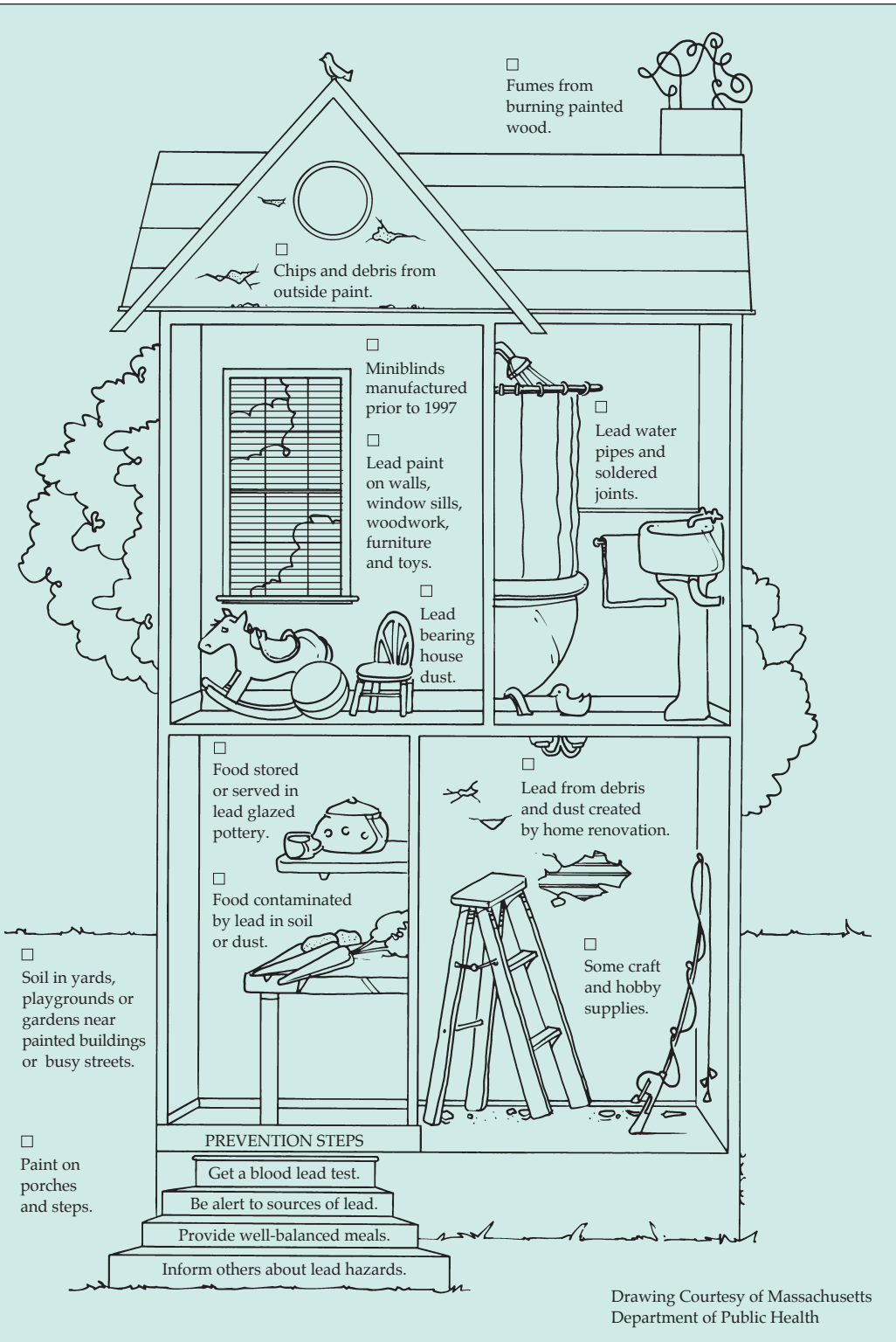
- Homes built before 1978 may contain lead paint
- Surveys indicate approximately 28 million homes in the United States still contain significant lead-based paint hazards, i.e. peeling and/or chipping paint

- Removing or disturbing lead paint during remodeling or demolition is very dangerous. Contact your local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Lead Program at 217-782-3517 or 886-909-3572 for information on how to remove lead paint safely or for a licensed lead contactor
- Lead check kits may be purchased from a hardware store. However, this may only indicate the presence of lead but will not reveal the amount of lead
- Other Web sites available for lead poisoning information are:
  - [www.cityofchicago.org/health](http://www.cityofchicago.org/health)
  - [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)
  - [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead)
  - [www.hud.gov/offices/lead](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead)

## YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE LEAD POISONING IF —

- He lives in or visits a home built before 1978 with peeling or chipping paint.
- She has been around dust from sanding or removing old paint.
- You have lead water pipes or fixtures.
- You live with someone who works with lead.

Other sources of lead are foods grown in contaminated soil; foods stored in imported pottery or imported cans with lead seams; bullets; fishing sinkers; and hobbies that use lead, such as ceramics and stained glass.



Drawing Courtesy of Massachusetts Department of Public Health



**State of Illinois**  
Illinois Department of Public Health

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**ALL CHILDREN AGES 6 MONTHS THROUGH 6 YEARS  
SHOULD BE ASSESSED FOR LEAD POISONING EVERY YEAR.**

For further information,  
contact the Illinois Department of Public Health's **Illinois Lead Program.**

866-909-3572

217-782-3517

TTY 800-547-0466

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